

COLORADO GOVERNORS

Julius C. Gunter



Scope and Content Note

The Governor Julius C. Gunter collection comprises 22 cubic feet of material and 1 roll of microfilm spanning his term of office from 1917-1919. Record series include the Executive Record; correspondence; proclamations; extraditions and requisitions; speeches and messages to the General Assembly; reports; and applications and appointments. These records document most aspects of his administration especially World War I, the State Defense Council, and the feelings that pervaded the state against foreign-born Germans and Eastern European citizens. There is also significant material about State Prohibition that began in 1916.

In addition to this material is a separate collection entitled "The Governor's Council of Defense," which has documentation concerning both World War I and World War II. This collection comprises 80 cubic feet of records and includes publications; press releases; pamphlets and posters; correspondence; reports; subject files; newspaper clippings;

memorandums; as well as numerous other record types. The collection includes letters from soldiers; minutes of the State Council of Defense; documents concerning spying activities during the War; a significant amount of material concerning the Women's Council of Defense; and Anti-Saloon League of America pamphlets. The Gunter and Governor's Council of Defense collections together provide important documentation concerning World War I.

Biography

Julius C. Gunter, Governor from 1917 to 1919, was born in Fayetteville, Arkansas on October 31, 1858. After graduating from the University of Virginia in 1879, he moved to Colorado, was admitted to the Colorado Bar, and opened a legal practice in Trinidad. Within seven years Julius Gunter's legal expertise was renowned which influenced his election to the bench of the Third Judicial District. By 1901 Judge Gunter was promoted to the Colorado Court of Appeals, and three years later to the Colorado Supreme Court. Judge Gunter was also elected to the presidency of the Colorado State Bar Association in 1907, although he did not receive his LLD from the University of Colorado until 1926.

Besides his interest in the law, Julius Gunter was also a great supporter of education in Colorado. In 1886 Judge Gunter was elected president of the private Tillotson Academy in Trinidad. Gunter also served concurrent terms as president of both Clayton College in Denver and Colorado University in Denver.

Judge Gunter was elected to the Colorado governorship just before all eyes turned to Europe as America entered the battlefields of WWI on April 6, 1917. Under Gunter's leadership Colorado became a major leader in the war effort. Even before the war was officially declared Colorado appropriated funds for the

mobilizing of its National Guard Troops, making it the first state to do so. Colorado also showed its patriotism when the legislature was first to pledge loyalty to the nation and President Woodrow Wilson on March 6, 1917. Colorado's patriotic zeal also infused the citizenry to ration and raise food, clothing, and war supplies. At the State government level, Governor Gunter organized the Colorado Home Guard, Colorado Wartime Council, and Council of Defense to meet the needs of the American troops. As Governor, Gunter's compassion was evident as he wrote personalized letters to families that had a Colorado soldier fall in battle.

With the unified spirit of patriotism often comes the ugliness of discrimination, however. Several organizations such as the Committee on Americanization and America First Society were created whose membership believed that foreign-born German and Eastern European citizens were plotting against and threatening the American industrial complex and the American way of life. German was no longer allowed to be taught in public schools, and German-American citizens were routinely persecuted. George Norlin, Chairman of the Committee on Americanization and President of the University of Colorado, wrote "The average foreign born laborer, unable to read English, is at the present time shut off from influences which make for loyalty to our country. His ears are open mainly to agitators who...seek to enlist him in the war of class against class." (March 27, 1918). While Gunter supported the development of educational programs for the foreign born, he did not support discrimination. He believed that the unity that came out of this patriotic zeal used the German-Americans as the scapegoats for its emotional fuel. When he appointed Ernest Morris, a Prussian-American, to the State Council of Defense many people protested and most newspapers came out against Gunter's decision. When businessmen asked him for military supervision of their foreign-born laborers, Gunter refused explaining that an American could be born anywhere.

As a result, Gunter was labeled Pro-German by the media, which effectively ended his political career and he was not even considered for reelection by his own Democratic Party. After many years of public service Judge and Governor Julius Caldeen Gunter died in Denver on October 26, 1940, and is buried in Fairmont Cemetery.

Bibliography

- Dorsett, Lyle. "The Ordeal of Colorado's Germans during WWI." Colorado Magazine, 51, pgs. 277 - 293.
- Julius Caldeen Gunter Collection (Unprocessed). The Colorado Historical Society.
- Julius Caldeen Gunter Collection. Newspaper Clipping Files. Western History Collection, Denver Public Library.
- Smith, Larry Joe. The Gubernatorial Career of Julius C. Gunter, 1917 - 1919. Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Denver, 1973.
- State Historical and Natural History Society of Colorado. History of Colorado: Biographical. "Hon. Julius Caldeen Gunter." Denver, Co.: Linderman Co., Inc., Vol. V., pg 91.

Series Descriptions

Executive Record

The Executive Record contains executive orders; appointments; legislative messages; pardons; extraditions and requisitions; honorary citations; and proclamations which were issued by Governor Ammons during his term of office from 1917-1919.

Correspondence

Included in this series is correspondence between Governor Gunter and his constituents, state and federal agencies and other public officials. It includes correspondence concerning "Americanization" efforts during the War; the War Fund; the selective draft; prohibition; state legislation; and claims resulting from the "Ludlow Massacre" in 1914. There are also letters from the families of deceased Colorado soldiers as well as correspondence with the Secretary of War and the Advisory War Council.

Reports

This series consists primarily of annual or biennial reports to the Governor from state agencies. Also included in this series is a scrapbook and synopsis from the Women's Council of Defense (1918) as well as several State Council of Defense reports.

Speeches and Messages

Gunter's Inaugural Address (1917), his Biennial Address to the General Assembly (1919) and a Veto Message on Senate Bill 19 concerning public school teacher tenure (1917) comprise this series.

Applications and Appointments

This series documents gubernatorial appointments to state agency offices and various boards and commissions.

Extraditions and Requisitions

This series includes documentation concerning the surrendering of alleged criminals to a different jurisdiction for trial. Documentation may include the application for extradition, the warrant for arrest, and correspondence from the Attorney General's office concerning the extradition.

Proclamations

This series consists of Executive Proclamations issued by the governor and deposited as filings in the Office of the Secretary of State.